



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

August 2, 2007

For immediate release

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PRODUCERS CAN PREVENT FISH KILLS BY ACTING NOW

MEDIA CONTACT: Tom McCarthy at (563) 927-2640.

DES MOINES — Is something fishy flowing to a lake or stream near you? The DNR reminds everyone it doesn't take much to cause a fish kill during summer months. Preventing manure and other pollutants from entering Iowa waters ensures fish and other aquatic life of Iowa flourish.

"We typically see fish kills happen during late summer, when any kind of runoff can further stress fish as temperatures soar," said Tom McCarthy, an environmental specialist at the DNR field office in Manchester. "Producers need to check their buildings and storage structures to make sure that they aren't compromised or overtopping."

Fish require dissolved oxygen in water in order to survive, and dissolved oxygen levels decrease when pollutants enter the water.

Manure runoff, herbicides, pesticides, nutrients and even organic matter such as milk or milk room wastes can also cause dissolved oxygen levels to drop, stressing fish.

Ammonia and ammonium, commonly found in manure runoff and pesticides, are lethal to fish at fairly low concentrations.

“High levels of ammonia in water also destroy fish tissue. We call it ‘burning their gills.’ At that point, the fish is just trying to get out of the water,” DNR Biologist Don Kline said.

This is also a good time for livestock and poultry producers to inspect their facilities, McCarthy said. Producers should look for leaks where manure could escape or is improperly stored, or where any potential pollutant within their facilities could potentially reach Iowa water.

Low flow streams during summer months mean even small amounts of pollutants entering water could be hazardous for fish.

“Even when you just see minnows dying, it’s showing you a bigger picture; and that is something’s wrong in the water,” Kline said.

“This is a water quality issue affecting the people of Iowa. Even when fish kills happen in small streams, they’re still part of the ecosystem and feed into bigger streams. It’s all connected,” McCarthy said.

Fish kills should be promptly reported to the DNR’s 24-hour spill line at (515) 281-8694.

Writer: Holly Williams

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AUGUST 7 EPC AGENDA REVISED

MEDIA CONTACT: Karen Grimes at (515) 281 -5135

DES MOINES – An addition to the Environmental Protection Commission’s Aug. 7 agenda will allow the commission to learn more about their responsibilities over confined animal feeding operations.

Requested by a commission member, the new presentation is scheduled for 11:30 a.m.

Other changes to the agenda include an expanded general discussion list focusing on water quality issues. The commission will hear updated information about bringing Iowa waters into compliance with the federal Clean Water Act, as well as learning more about Iowa’s 2006 impaired waters list. The DNR’s budget process is also going to be discussed during the general discussion time.

The meeting will be held at the DNR Air Quality Building, 7900 Hickman Road, Urbandale, at 10 a.m. with public participation scheduled for 10:30 a.m.

The revised agenda may be accessed at: www.iowadnr.gov/epc/index.html.

Writer: Holly Williams

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PUBLIC ASKED TO ATTEND MEETING ON IMPROVING MILFORD CREEK

MEDIA CONTACT: Chris Van Gorp, DNR, at (515) 281-4791.

ARNOLDS PARK – Iowans interested in improving Milford Creek in Dickinson County can attend an Aug. 13 public meeting and review a DNR improvement plan for the stream.

The DNR has developed a water quality improvement plan for Milford Creek, which is on the state's impaired waters list because it is not supporting the amount and diversity of aquatic life that it should. The creek also drains the Iowa Great Lakes.

The DNR will ask Iowans for their input on the improvement plan at an Aug. 13 meeting in Arnolds Park. The meeting will take place at 1:30 p.m. at the Iowa Great Lakes Maritime Museum, 243 West Broadway St.

“We encourage Iowans in the Great Lakes area to come to the meeting and learn more about how they can use the water quality improvement plan to help improve Milford Creek,” said Chris Van Gorp, with the DNR's Watershed Improvement section.

Those not able to attend the public meeting can receive more information at www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/tmdl/ and submit comments on the plan (by Sept. 4) via the following ways:

E-mail: chris.vangorp@dnr.state.ia.us

Telephone: Chris Van Gorp at (515) 281-4791

Mail: Chris Van Gorp, care of Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319

The DNR's water quality improvement plan, also called by its technical name of Total Maximum Daily Load, outlines the problems and potential solutions to the problems in Milford Creek.

After gathering Iowans' comments, the DNR will forward the final plan to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval. Local groups interested in helping Milford Creek can then use the plan to assist their improvement efforts.

Writer: Jessie Brown

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PUBLIC ASKED FOR INPUT ON BIG SIOUX WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

MEDIA CONTACT: Chris Van Gorp, Iowa DNR, at (515) 281-4791.

DES MOINES – Iowans interested in improving water quality in the Big Sioux River can comment on a draft Water Quality Improvement Plan through Sept. 7.

High bacteria levels are the main cause of water quality problems in the Big Sioux River, located in northwest Iowa. Those bacteria indicate that waste from wildlife, livestock, birds and humans is in the water. The bacteria come from sources throughout the watershed, or area of land that drains into the river. Those sources include treated wastewater, rain and snow runoff from areas with wildlife and livestock, and leaking septic systems.

The water quality improvement plan is also known as a TMDL, or Total Maximum Daily Load. TMDLs are calculations used to determine how much of a pollutant a water body can receive and still maintain water quality standards.

Iowans can submit comments on the Big Sioux River plan via e-mail, phone or mail through Sept. 7.

The draft plan and supporting documents can be obtained through:

Internet: www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/tmdl/publicnotice.html

E-mail: william.graham@dnr.state.ia.us

Telephone: William Graham at (515) 281-5917

Mail: William Graham, care of Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319

As part of the Big Sioux River watershed lies in South Dakota, the draft plan has been compiled in a joint effort between the South Dakota Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (SDDENR) and the Iowa DNR. The original plan, completed in the spring of 2006, has been updated to include data and information from South Dakota.

After receiving public comments, the IDNR and SDDENR will submit the draft plan to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for final approval.